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DE RUEHRB #0630 0971413
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 071413Z APR 06
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3326
INFO RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 3886
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 1680
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2879
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 5444
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY 3106
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 4131

RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA PRIORITY 1518
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0958
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

UNCLAS RABAT 000630

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR NEA/MAG, PRM; CAIRO FOR CHEYNE; GENEVA FOR RMA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [MO](#)

SUBJECT: UNHCR REMAINS UPBEAT ON REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

REF: A. CAIRO 1693

1B. STATE 51221

11. (SBU) Over lunch March 30, UNHCR Head of Office Johannes Van der Klaauw told Polcouns that he remained optimistic at UNHCR's capacity to resettle abroad several hundred individuals in Morocco whom UNHCR had determined to be refugees. Following the visit of Cairo-based refugee coordinator (Ref A), Van der Klaauw said he had received some signs of interest from the Spanish in resettling additional refugees, and the French had agreed to take one case -- an 80-year-old Iraqi man who has lived in Morocco since the 1980s. Apart from that, he had not had a strong response to his pitch to the diplomatic community in Rabat on March 6. He was clearly hoping the US would take the bulk of the caseload. In the meantime, he was pleased that fewer would-be refugees were showing up at UNHCR's office in Rabat; the word seemed to be getting out, particularly among Nigerians, that not many were qualifying (comment: we no longer see the long lines outside of UNHCR's office, located near the embassy, that we saw several months ago).

12. (SBU) Van der Klaauw commented that he also hoped to organize training in handling of refugees and migrants for Moroccan security forces. He said there is not systematic abuse of migrants in Morocco, but he does not believe that Moroccan security forces, particularly on the frontier, understand that those whom the UN has recognized as refugees cannot be abused. Security forces are not respecting UN documents, he said. Van der Klaauw says UNHCR advises migrants to stay away from Morocco's international borders for their own security.

13. (SBU) Van der Klaauw said he is working on a letter of agreement to regularize UNHCR's relations with the Moroccan government as a prerequisite for starting up the resettlement program.

14. (SBU) Returning to the issue of migrants, Van der Klaauw expressed concern that the problems of last fall, in which hundreds of migrants stormed the barrier fences separating Morocco from two Spanish enclaves in the north, could be repeated, though the numbers might be smaller. He understood from NGOs that work in northern Moroccan that migrants continued to gather in the forests in preparation for trying

to get into Europe.

15. (SBU) Van der Klaauw noted that UNHCR would attend the regional migration conference, to be held in Rabat in July, as an observer, along with the World Bank, UNDP, and IOM. He regretted that Algeria had declined to participate in the conference (Ref B), saying Algeria's absence would lessen the effectiveness of the conference. Polcouns said the US concurred and hoped Algeria would change its mind.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/rabat>

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